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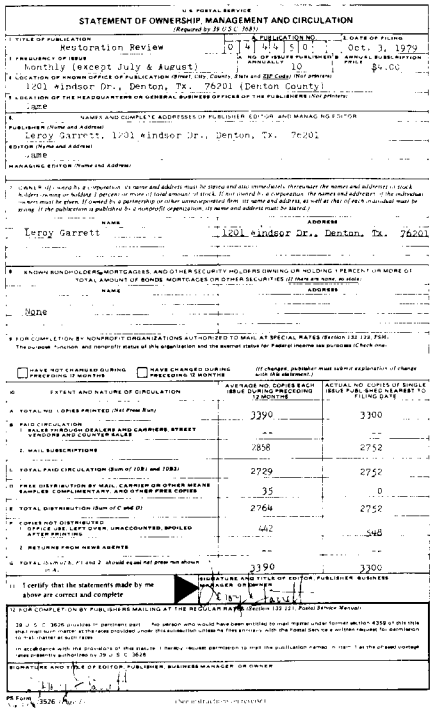

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A reader in Columbia, Mo. sent an intersting appraisal of this journal: "I would hate to miss an issue of what proves to be a continual disclosure of truth (usually), insight (often), and honesty (always). The call of unity in Christ is being heard. Keep up the good work." We thought the adverbs were especially pungent! But the nouns well express our goals, however frail be our efforts: *truth, insight, honesty* and of course the call for unity.

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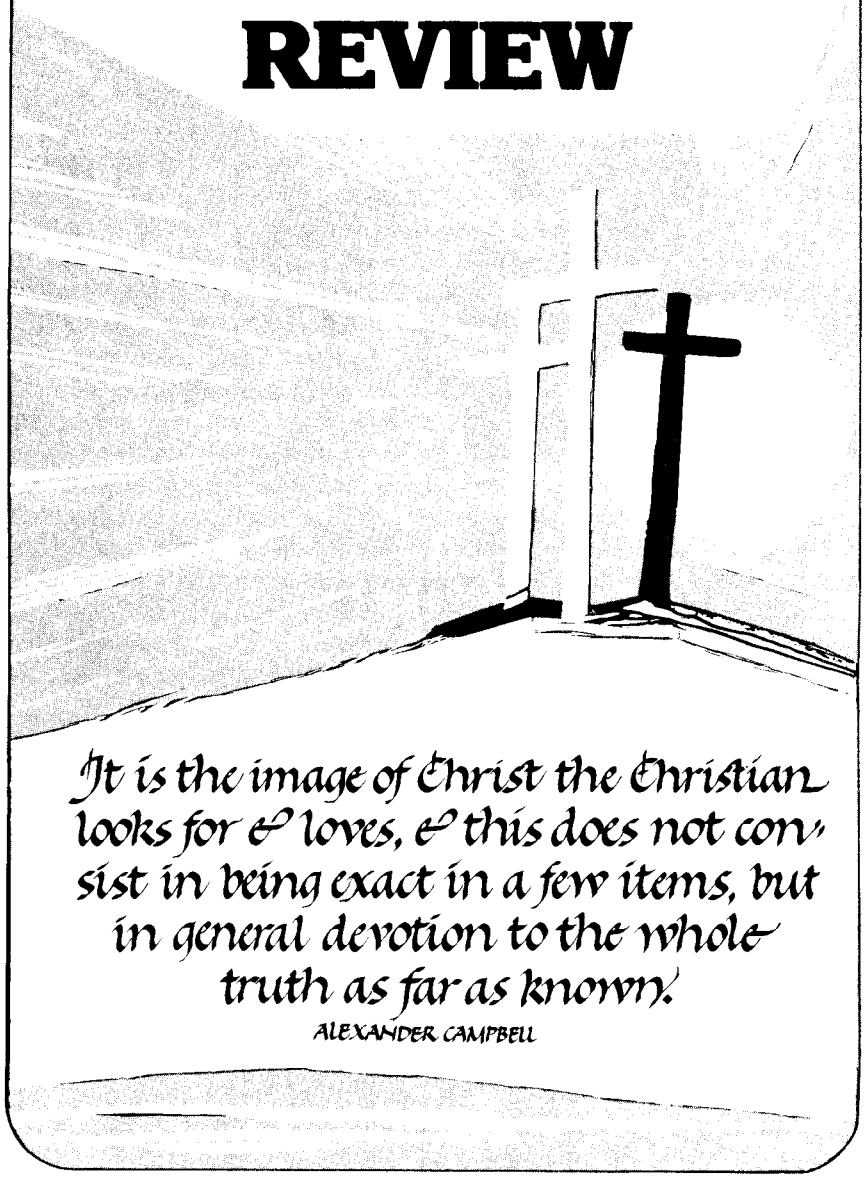
RESTORATION REVIEW


It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for & loves, & this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as known.
ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

Vol. 21, No. 8 Leroy Garrett, Editor October 1979

Blessed Are the Peacemakers . . .

WILL ONE WORD SUM IT UP?

Confucius was the great teacher of the ancient Orient. He was a master in teaching self-improvement and he stressed devotion to parents, ideals that our modern culture has well nigh lost sight of. Confucius believed that one is morally obligated to improve himself, and this he is to do by building right relationships. He was a humanist in the noblest sense of that term. Even though he lived in the sixth century before Christ, he was enamoured by the wisdom of the past and would refer to "ancient times" in his teaching. "In ancient times," he would say, "men learned with a view to their own improvement. Nowadays men learn with a view to the approbation of others." He laid it on us all, in all ages, with that one, didn't he?

Since I look through a glass darkly from the perspective of this world, I know not whether the old sage is numbered among the redeemed, and, if so, what street he lives on in glory. But one day an angel may take my order on whom I wish to visit, and I will include the name of Confucius, who may now have a new name. But the angel will know. That visit would be something else. I could ask him how he ever gained such insight as "Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know men," and "Without recognizing the ordinances of Heaven, it is impossible to be a superior man." Yes, and how on earth did he ever come up with the Golden Rule, six hundred years before the Messiah himself pronounced it?

It is the occasion of Confucius giving the Golden Rule that serves the purpose of this essay. His disciples asked him if there was not one word that would summarize all of his teaching. They wanted it shelled, capsuled in easy-to-grasp terms, like many a modern student. Yes, there is such a word, Confucius told them, and the word was *reciprocity.* If they would just go through life *reciprocating,* in every relationship, that would do it. And before they could ask him what he meant by such a big word as *reciprocity,* he told them: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." It was the Golden Rule stated negatively, and when the Jewish rabbis taught it hundreds of years later they also expressed it negatively. Only the Messiah put it this way: "All

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things whatsover ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And Jesus, like Confucius, indicated that this summed it all up, for he added: *This is the law and the prophets.*

For several months I have been writing about the peacemaker in this column, and in the tradition of master teachers I am asking if there is not one word or idea that wraps it all up. Who is the peacemaker, teacher, in a word?

Yes, there is one word that tells the story, and that is *love.* He loves the giver of peace, who is the Creator, and he loves those for whom the gift of peace is intended, all of humanity. Moreover, he loves to *make* peace. So *love* is the word. The peacemaker is in love.

Peace is the fruit of love, or as Gal. 5:22 puts it, peace and love are the harvest of the Spirit within us. Love makes peace because it expects nothing in return for what it does. It acts because there is a need. It does not even calculate what good may come to it once it has cultivated peace in a heart where hate and suspicion once lurked. Love does not make peace so that it may enjoy peace and be free of the ordeal of malice and oppression. It is not even that much concerned for self. Love makes peace very much as a tree makes peaches. It is love's nature to make peace. Where there is love there is peace, where there is peace there is love.

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard suggested that the love that makes peace is like an infinite debt that one pays on, realizing that he can never get it paid. Indeed, since it is infinite, the debt is not even reduced. So love has no idea of ever finishing its task or redeeming its debt. It is never "through" with anyone; never gives up on anyone. Love goes on making peace, like the tree goes on bearing its fruit, as long as it is what it is, *love.*

The love that expects no reward may be very rare, and it may seldom be within us without mixture. But to the extent that it is there, flowing through us from the heart of God, it makes peace. The apostle makes clear the source of this love: "God's love has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us" (Rom. 5:5). The power is clearly not our own. Selfless love is possible only because "He who is within us is greater than he that is within the world."

To act for others without expecting anything in return! This is what love, *agape* love, is all about, and it is this that distinguishes it from all other loves. And these loves (such as *eros* love in friendship) are great blessings to the world, and they too make for peace — at least the peace that the world knows. But the peace that Christ gives, and the peacemaker that he promises to bless, is produced only by a love that "seeketh not its own," which is a love that takes no thought of itself when it acts. Friendship love, as productive as it is for good, *does* seek

something in return, the fruits of friendship. Friendship has its laws, and if they are violated one loses his friends. But not so with the peacemaker-lover. She goes right on making peace, and there are no laws controlling it. It is not a reciprocal agreement, Confucius notwithstanding. Agape love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things, when nothing else will.

This is to say that love can do all things, and it takes that kind of power to make peace. *Love is power!* When we plug into the outlet that God makes available to us through the indwelling Spirit, powerful things can and do happen. The enemies that peace must overcome — envy, jealousy, hate, bitterness, partyism — are deeply rooted and invulnerable against the powers of this world. It is only when the power of the Holy Spirit is brought to bear against them that such enemies can be destroyed. So the kingdom of God is not just talk, but *power,* as I Cor. 4:20 assures us. Love makes peace because love is power.

We see this power in a changed life. Those who have learned to love have not only plugged in to the power that has changed their own lives, but that power flows out from them like rivers of water. Those who are adept at arguing against a doctrinal issue find themselves silent in the face of a changed life. And no change is so dramatic as a sectarian who becomes a peacemaker. I see this now and again all over the country, and I rejoice over what the power of love has done in the lives of humble people.

But in all this we must realize that we are at best frail, sinful creatures, and that God's love can operate within us only imperfectly. It is like trying to cultivate a beautiful garden in soil that is beset with ever-increasing weeds. Some semblance of the beauty can be realized with proper application, but the imperfections are ever abundant. God knows all this and uses us anyway, warts and all. But we must not look for perfection, and we must be patient both with ourselves and others, and be thankful that love is able to work in our lives at all. We must believe in love, and even this faith in love is begotten of love. Love believes all things — even in the love that is trying to flow through the labyrinthine ways of our selfish lives. — *the Editor*

Love looks through a telescope; envy through a microscope. — *Josh Billings*

Love is like the moon; when it does not increase it decreases. — *Pierre de Segur*

THE PRINCIPLE OF GENERAL DEVOTION

The words on our front cover speak volumes in reference to the renewal of the church in our time. Mark them well;

It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves, and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as known.

Alexander Campbell realized that a sect by its very nature makes a big deal out of those doctrines peculiar to itself to the neglect of general devotion. Each party has "the issues" by which virtually everything and everybody is judged. A church or a preacher is *sound* or *faithful,* not so much in terms of his general committment to Jesus, but in reference to his response to the issues agitated by the party judging him. Many a preacher has become a "heretic," not because of disloyalty to Jesus as Lord, but for veering from the party line.

A brother in our Denton congregation, who once lived in Abilene, told me of his reaction to the big debate held there some years ago between two machos on the "institutional question," the place of Hearld of Truth in particular. He told of how the college students wept over the internecine conflict. His own impression was that if the Christian faith is so involved and meticulous in detail as the debate implied, then it can hardly be good news, for the common man has no way of putting together such a jigsaw puzzle.

But those who are of this persuasion are willing to draw the line on their sisters and brothers, rejecting them as "liberal," no matter how devoted to the faith such ones are *generally.* And it is this *general* devotion that we should seek to cultivate. If a sister practices the presence of Christ in her life every day and every hour, seeking to emulate his sweet gentleness in her life, I should have no problem in bearing with her "Charismatic kick," as some are calling it. Does her life *generally* conform to the Christian profession? If so, I should not be so concerned over a few details in which I suppose she is wrong. It is a hard lesson to learn, perhaps because we are so hung up on details.

Our pioneers, who put together this Reformation movement (and it is noteworthy that they did *not* call it a *Restoration*), were aware that a reformation can never be based on details but must always be grounded in general truths. Robert Richardson stated this well in a series on "Reformation" in the *Millennial Harbinger* (Vol. 18, p. 504):

"The history of Christianity, indeed, from its very origin until now, might surely suffice to show how utterly vain and hopeless is the attempt to induce the world to adopt any particular set of opinions or system of doctrines which can be devised by human skill."

Our own recent history shows how "utterly vain" such an effort is. We ourselves are divided into a dozen or more parties, each with its set of doctrines, and we cannot even induce our own folk to adopt one particular set, much less the world.

Richardson pointed to one principle that formed the essence of the reformation effort of which he was part, and the only principle that presents a basis for unity: *a generalization of Christianity.* In the same essay he put the same idea in a different way: *That alone which saves men can unite them.* Referring to the obvious distinction between the Bible and the gospel, the doctor reminds his readers that the apostles preached the gospel, which saves and unites men, before they had the Bible. "Let the Bible be our spiritual library," he said, "but let the Gospel be our standard of orthodoxy." The Bible is the means to perfection, he noted, but it is "Christian profession" that is our formula for unity.

Richardson is saying that we should make nothing a test of fellowship that God has not made a condition for salvation, which reformers have been saying since the time of John Locke. The Bible is the word of God, and, as Richardson says, it is our spiritual library, but it is not, as such, the gospel. There are many details of doctrine in Scripture, some very difficult to understand, that the church never has and never will understand alike. But the gospel — the general truths of what God has done for us through Christ — is understandable to us all, and it is *the gospel,* not all the details in the Bible, that is given of God to save and unite the lost world.

In the same series (Vol. 19, p. 73) Richardson names two errors that have been an obstruction to unity and fellowship. One is that parties in their terms of communion have "gone too much in detail," and the other is that they have made opinions formularies of faith. The first error violates Christian liberty in that it dictates in matters not essential to salvation. The second error violates the one great truth that there should be one gospel faith. Then he lays down an epigram that should be proclaimed throughout the land, not excluding our schools of preaching: *It is as essential to unity that there should be a universal faith as it is to diversity that there should be an individual opinion.*

That really puts the finger on what ails us. We have "gone too much in detail" in our standard for accepting each other, and as a consequence we have not preserved the unity that is based upon the one catholic faith, and we have lost the diversity that depends on individual opinions freely held.

Doctrinal details, when properly interpreted, are of course important. But they are for "the after edification of the church," as

Thomas Campbell put it in his memorable *Declaration and Address,* and are not to be made terms of acceptance.

The principle of general devotion gives us a sense of proportion. We have had too many leaders in the church who were "exact in a few items," but who were less than exemplary in their business dealings, or in the way they treated their wives, or in generally manifesting the spirit of Christ. Yes, and we have too many Churches of Christ that are far more *church* than they are *Christian.* There are lots of churches, to be sure, but how many of them are truly the Body of Christ? Such a question speaks more to the *character* of the people than to how "sound" they are in a few items. Scripturally speaking, that is what sound doctrine is, the wholesome teaching that transforms one more and more to the likeness of Jesus.

May the Lord give us more generalists and fewer specialists. The specialists impose upon us their favorite bag, *anti* this or *anti* that, or *pro* this or *pro* that, while the generalists, in the tradition of Campbell and Richardson, think in terms of an overall devotion to Jesus Christ, even if there are a few weak spots here and there.

In writing this essay I think of the emphasis of Alfred North Whitehead in his *Aims of Education,* in which he claims that our schools try to teach too many subjects and thus miss what should be the aim of all education, *Life in all its manifestations.* Too much knowledge is inert, he charges. It must come alive and relate to life. So teachers should not get bogged down in so many details ('tis better to learn one language well than a smattering of several!), and thus teach less and teach it better.

That is something like what we are saying to the church. Our overall aim should be Christlikeness. In pursuing that goal we might teach less (fewer details) and teach it better. — *the Editor*

Highlights in Restoration History . . .

HOW OUR PIONEERS USED ROMANS 14

Romans 14, which is sort of a mandate for unity in diversity, may well be one of the most neglected portions of the apostolic writings. The apostle lays down a principle in this chapter that would radically change the attitude that we often have in Churches of Christ about differences,

if it were only heeded. After granting that his readers had different views on matters that they believed to be important, he says in verse 5: *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,* or as the Good News renders it: "Each one should firmly make up his own mind."

Paul is saying that each of us may hold even strong opinions that differ from those of others, and yet accept each other as sisters and brothers. He gives the grounds for allowing such a measure of liberty in verse 4: "Who are you to judge the servant of someone else? It is his own Master who will decide whether he succeeds or fails. And he will succeed because the Lord is able to make him succeed."

So I am *not* my brother's keeper, but rather my brother's brother. He is his own keeper, or the Lord is his keeper. Neither am I his judge. It is before his own Master (not I) that he stands or falls. The first verse, therefore, assigns me my responsibility toward my brother or sister: "Welcome the person who is weak in faith, but do not argue with him about his personal opinions."

Much of our practice has been the opposite of this. We *do* argue or debate with our brother, and if he comes around to our way of thinking we accept him and extend the right hand of fellowship. If he does not agree with us, he is a brother in error, and he must "get right" or remain unworthy of our acceptance. Rom. 14 allows that a brother may be "wrong" or *weak* (he has views or practices different from your own), but he is still to be accepted — *because he is a brother,* not because he agrees with you. And the acceptance is not to be conditioned upon his changing his mind to your way of thinking. You are to accept him, not debate him!

There are instances in the work of our pioneers that show that they understood and practiced the great truths on fellowship in Rom. 14. Considering that Paul's argument in Rom. 14 extends to 15:7 where he draws his grand conclusion, we see that Thomas Campbell looked to that passage as the basis of the Movement he launched for the unity of all believers. More than once in the *Declaration and Address* he appeals to Rom. 15:7 "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

Under proposition 2 of his *Address* he refers to this passage as the way of avoiding "uncharitable divisions" in the various congregations, and in the next proposition he gives a rule by which it can always be practiced: "Nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God."

What grief would have been spared even among ourselves if we had heeded that rule! We have imposed upon each other, not so much what the Scriptures clearly set forth, but our own deductions of what the

Bible says or does not say. Worse than ignoring Campbell's wisdom is our indifference to the apostolic injunction: *Receive one another even as Christ has received you.* Were we right about everything when Christ received us?

A few pages over Campbell refers to Rom. 15:7 again. He notes that union with Christ is "the first and foundation truth of our Christianity," and then says that our union with each other in Christ is next in significance — "that we receive each other, as Christ has also received us, to the glory of God."

This principle of receiving each other on the same basis that Christ received us, which is the conclusion of the whole of Rom. 14, also found application in the dramatic case of Aylett Rains, who was on the verge of being disfellowshipped during the early years of the Movement. Since he held some Universalist's views, the preachers of the Mahoning Association, which was the nucleus of the Campbell movement in the early 1820's, were ready to disown him. During the proceedings Thomas Campbell made a speech in Rains' behalf, avowing that he'd allow his hand to be burned from his arm before he would withdraw it from his young brother. He rather urged that they implore Rains to preach the gospel and keep his opinions to himself.

Alexander Campbell then spoke for Rains, quoting Rom. 14:1: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." Uncle Alex believed that it is in order to fellowship brothers in error. Had he not done so he would have had no one to fellowship!

Rains was saved for the work of reformation and went on to render excellent service for upwards of a half century, especially in Kentucky. But how many have we lost through a failure to practice what the apostle clearly enjoins? We are not to judge and disfellowship our brothers, but to love and accept them. If the Campbells could abide erroneous views as far out as Universalism, we should be able to respond more graciously to the differences that are allowed to keep us separated these days.

In his *Recollections of Men of Faith* W. C. Rogers has a chapter on Aylett Rains, who was converted by Walter Scott. He includes a letter that Rains wrote to Alexander Campbell some years after the episode described above, explaining that his old errors had been slowly and imperceptibly erased from his mind. He was now giving his life to the work of an evangelist, believing that "the facts of the New Testament will conquer the world." Those facts had conquered him, he told Campbell.

Campbell recorded Rains' letter in the 1830 *Millennial Harbinger* (p. 148) in an article in which he gives his views on opinions, to the

effect that even wrong opinions are not to be made tests of fellowship so long as they are held as private property. He explains on what grounds he would withdraw from a brother like Rains: "If he will dogmatize and become a factionist, we reject him — not because of his opinions, but because of his attempting to make a faction, or to Lord it over God's heritage."

It is apparent that our most eminent pioneers understood the relevance of Rom. 14 and made significant use of it in launching their unity effort.

They were both wise and good men. They were wise in recognizing that erroneous views need not destroy a man or one's relationship with him, but that the wrong notion will die a natural death sooner than if you try to kill it. They were good in that they put persons before party politics. We have much to learn from our forebears, vital knowledge that will save us a lot of grief and fratricide. — *the Editor*

THE LEGAL EAGLES

Robert Meyers

Sometimes a phrase sticks in the mind even against the mind's will. I forget data important to me as preacher or professor, but remember for years the jingle of an old ad: "You'll wonder where the yellow went, When you brush your teeth with Pepsodent!"

Nor can I forget an old Groucho Marx movie in which the great old comic actor set up for business under the name of *J. Cheever Loophole, The Legal Eagle.* Partly, I suppose, because I've met so many religious legal eagles who belonged to the Loophole family, eternally obsessed with discovering some hidden sub-section of law or with making ingenious inferences from language as tenuous as morning fog.

These legalists define life by rules, and grow so enamored of them that they go about looking for them so as to fit them to every conceivable circumstance. If they do not exist, the legalist contrives to create them. He can fabricate one at the drop of a hat, spinning it off with marvelous dexterity.

To such a man, all of the Bible is a codebook of rules. It is impossible for him to comprehend what Paul meant when he said that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. He is unable to see that "letter" and "law" are equivalent in this text, and that his legalism is therefore a hopeless, destructive way of life.

Nothing ever illustrated legalism better than a religious debate I heard once in which each man took his stand upon a base of rigid law.

They were trying to prove that is was right, or that it was not right, for one church to cooperate with another in certain good endeavors. They used subtleties of argument that would have done justice to the best of medieval scholastics. No Supreme Court lawyer ever quibbled more earnestly over the connotation of a word than these two men over their semantic tidbits.

As I sat there my mind kept escaping from the floodlit arena where the two men boxed at each other with prooftexts from Scripture. I thought of Russia and America, two giant antagonists squared off against each other with the most awesome destructive power ever known; of an immense drug traffic which seems out of control; of the evils of poverty, illiteracy, crime, cancer, over-population, tyranny.

This is the world we live in, I thought, and right in the midst of it I had gone to a church building to hear two men discuss whether it is scriptural for churches to cooperate with each other to preach the gospel and do good works!

One man said that each church had to be independent, but that if it sent money to another church for a program like the Hearld of Truth, it became dependent. I never quite understood why this had to follow, but he was sure of it. He explained the subtle theological distinctions between being "dependent," "independent," and "interdependent." He drew multitudes of circles on the blackboard, and then put more circles within the circles, and sometimes the mind had difficulty following the logic. But he said that it was all so terribly important that we might be forever damned if we didn't get it straight.

I couldn't help thinking about the early Christian folk, not many of them wise, not many wealthy. I doubted that members of the Christian communities in Corinth, Colosse and Philippi could have grasped such subtle distinctions as this man made. He labored for ten minutes to show that a church can send "alms" to another church, but can't send "money." The "alms" could take the form of money, but so long as it was "alms" it would be scriptural. My mind jumped wildly to the name of Phoebe, deaconness in the Cenchrean church, and I wondered if she could have gotten that distinction clearly enough to please God.

But it was fascinating that night to watch legalism at work. I saw that when two legal eagles debate an issue from that stance, each spinning out complicated laws from any whispered hint in the Bible, the one who is more clever will always win. It will not matter whether he is right or wrong; he will win simply because he is more ingenious. If he can spin out laws like cotton candy, and make his own prooftexts sound more plausible than the other fellow's, he will win. If he is glib and

authoritative and impressive — if he can crack jokes, wheedle persuasively, thunder powerfully, and come up with fetching slogans — he will win.

Intellectually, I was on the side of the man who said that groups could cooperate. Besides, he was the nicer of the two. But the man on the other side won. His demonstration of legalistic genius was superior; he knew all the tricks in the book. I felt a certain grudging admiration for his skills, though I wondered at the same time how many visiting preachers were squirming a little at the memory of the last time they told a "sectarian" that the Bible was a simple book which all men could see alike if they only would.

I cherish the deep concern which brought many to that meeting. They wanted very much to know what the word of God had to say to them. But otherwise it was a profoundly depressing experience and, surely, a dying game. How many can go on believing that God would balance our eternal destiny on some turn of phrase, or send us irrevocably to hell because we fell victim to the *wrong* legalist's creative mind?

When I think of all the ancient quarrels which have divided us and broken so many hearts, I am comforted by a certain poignant tale printed some years ago in *Life* magazine. It told of the reunion of Union and Confederate troops at Gettysburg one hot summer day back in 1913, fifty years after Pickett's division had charged toward the low stone wall where the Union's Second Corps waited. When these old men met, all rancor had vanished, replaced by a feeling which many of them unashamedly called love.

They reenacted the charge and the yells; the Confederates gained the wall and stopped, holding out their hands. The Federals stretched theirs out to clasp them, and the ranks stood eye to eye. There was silence for a moment and a few of the old men began to weep, their tears coursing down into grizzled beards. Those beards had given them the standing joke for the day: "We *all* wear gray now." Age had overtaken them, one and all, and reminded them of their common humanity.

On the last day, when all but a few of the old men had departed, two of them dawdled on the railway platform in Gettysburg, reluctant to say goodbye. Repeatedly they shook hands, and finally they threw their arms around one another. Neither was particularly good with words, but both sensed that the occasion called for something more than handclasps and an embrace. The idea struck them simultaneously: on the platform they took off their coats and exchanged them. The Union veteran from Oregon went home in gray, and the Louisiana Confederate in blue.

In our religious civil wars many of us, grown older, have found the love that swallows up differences. Can we find a way to teach younger men, so that they will know their brothers sooner and have no need to go to war at all?

Pilgrimage of Joy . . . No. 38

A LETTER FROM ABILENE

W. Carl Ketcherside

It must have been about 1963 that Mission Messenger began to be influential internationally. Included in reports to be found in the paper for that year are some from Australia, Canada, Okinawa, England, The Netherlands, Chile, Scotland, Thailand, Denmark and Finland. It was great to receive letters and subscriptions from such far-away places, but this eventually proved our undoing. Nell was taking care of all the wrapping and bundling of the papers, as well as looking after the subscription list. Some people moved so frequently that it actually amounted to us sending the paper to them and paying them for reading it.

Eventually the paper was going to more than 8200 homes on every continent. We had to stop. Nell was actually working for twelve hours some days. After giving notice of intent for three years we reached the end of our row on December 1, 1975. Although we ceased publication then we still receive a great many subscriptions. Persons who have never heard of us before, will read an old paper and send in a dollar asking to be put on the list. We claim to be the only publishers who ever discontinued because they were too successful.

It was on January 31, 1963, that J. D. Thomas of Abilene Christian College published in *Gospel Advocate,* an article entitled "Brother Ketcherside's New Fallacy." It was full of such manifest error that I wrote B. C. Goodpasture asking for space in which to reply. He would not grant it. So I wrote to Brother Thomas and made an offer for fair examination of my ideas at Abilene. I wrote as follows:

"Since I am sure that you believe in the right of sincere brethren who present their appeal in love, to be heard, can it be arranged that I come to Abilene for three sessions of two hours each, for public examination of my thesis? If so, I suggest that in the first two sessions I present objectively my position as to unity of the believers for one hour, and then submit to an hour of public questioning by a panel composed of three brethren, yourself being one and the other two being men of

your selection. I further suggest that in the third session, after presentation of my views, I submit to questions (either oral or written) from the entire audience, yourself acting as chairman of the meeting.

It would be understood that neither yourself nor Abilene Christian College concurred in or endorsed my views, but simply that as free men we met in interest of truth. I pledge upon my honor, that I will conduct myself with gentlemanly courtesy to all of the brethren, and if I cannot lessen areas of conflict I will not widen them."

At the time I had confidence that I might be invited to Abilene on the above fair and equitable terms, so that the perceptive students could hear and then reach their own conclusions. My hopes were dashed when, on February 9, I received the following curt note from Brother Thomas:

"Dear Brother Ketcherside: In reply to your recent letter inquiring about a public discussion of your present views, I wish to state that, for good and sufficient reasons, I would not be interested in trying to have such a discussion. Sincerely yours, *J. D. Thomas.*"

I kept on trying, thinking that conditions might have changed. Every year I published my offer to come to any college among us and subject my views to the scrutiny of faculty members. I then saw a letter written to the president of Abilene Christian, by Norman Parks, and after reading the reply to it I gave up on ever receiving a fair hearing before the student body. It was obvious that the administration and the doctors were fearful of what might happen. They could attack my views at will and refuse me the opportunity of being heard in an equitable exchange.

This was the year in which I was first asked to speak at the North American Christian Convention. It was held at the Long Beach Convention Center. I was appalled to see the sectarian attitude so rampant in one meeting. Fortunately, the brethren have "cleaned up their act" since that time, but the demonstration they put on in that meeting was one of the most childish and blatant exhibitions of party spirit I had ever seen exhibited. My speech was delivered on the evening of June 27, and it had an electrifying effect. It was the first time a non-instrument brother had spoken and it received the first standing ovation ever accorded up to that time.

Since that time, Leonard Wymore, has tried to feature one or more men from the non-instrument segment. Bill Banowsky, Norvel Young, Marvin Phillips, Ira North, Leroy Garrett, and others have spoken and been well received. I substituted once for Joe Barnett from Lubbock, whose secretary telephoned the night before his appearance and said he was sick. The meeting is the largest and best attended of any within the restoration movement. I have addressed the saints three times and

thoroughly enjoyed it. It is strictly a preaching convention. No business is transacted. No resolutions are drawn up. The brethren believe in the autonomy of the local church. It is a great big get-together of people from all over who meet and enjoy one another's company. Leonard Wymore is one of God's noblemen.

During the year I spoke at numerous colleges, among which were Manhattan Christian, Manhattan, Kansas; Nebraska Christian, Norfork, Nebraska; Puget Sound College of the Bible, Seattle, Washington; Johnson Bible College, Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee; and Minnesota Bible College, then in Minneapolis, but since moved to Rochester. In every one of these I found students who were eager to hear the message of peace on earth to men of good will.

There were two opportunities afforded to really cross over lines. In Nebraska I was invited to Dana College, on March 22. It is a liberal arts school under supervision of the Augustanan Lutheran Conference, and a great many of the students were Scandinavian by birth. It was interesting to me to see the ritual in chapel. It was much like that to which I was accustomed in my earlier days in the Missouri Synod. After speaking to the students publicly I went down to the lounge and conversed with them privately and in small groups for another hour. I found them turned off by the liturgy.

The other occasion was on October 27 when I went to Kendallville, Indiana, to deliver a Reformation Day address. It came three days before the anniversary of Martin Luther's nailing the 95 theses against the church door in Wittenberg. We had a joint meeting of all the Protestant Churches and I spoke on "Heretics and Heroes." I made the point that a heretic is a hero ahead of his time. All a heretic has to do is to be dead a hundred years and he will become a hero. One generation hurls stones at a heretic, which the next generation picks up and makes a monument from them.

Everything that has been gained in religion has been gained by those accused of being heretics. Luther, Huss, Zwingli, Calvin and Wesley, were all branded as such by their contemporaries. It is often easier to label one a heretic than it is to deal with what he is saying. Luther faced an Establishment which was well entrenched. The Elector of Saxony said, "I am not at all surprised that it has made so much noise; for he has committed two unpardonable crimes; he has attacked the pope's tiara, and the monk's bellies."

I pointed to the need of another reformation with Luther's words: "I will say what I mean, boldly and briefly; the Church needs reformation. And this cannot be the work either of a single man, as the pope, or of many men, as the cardinals and councils: but it must be that of the whole world, or rather it is a work that belongs to God

alone. As for the time in which such a reformation should begin he alone knows who has created all time. The dike is broken, and it is no longer in our power to restrain the impetuous and overwhelming billows."

It was during this time that Martin M. Mitchum, who was an elder in the Christian Church at Rolla, Missouri, and a man with great insight, decided to take definite steps to do something tangible about the unity of believers. He invited Don DeWelt, Howard Short, and myself, to engage in public dialogue on fellowship. Don was from Ozark Bible College. Howard was editor of *The Christian,* now called *The Disciple.* This was before restructure had taken place among the Disciples of Christ, and we had a meaningful discussion. Each of us spoke fifteen minutes and then sat down together to field questions from the audience. All three of us came away with a greater feeling of respect for each other.

I have often wondered since what would have happened if such discussions could have continued among top-level men. Would it have made a difference? Was the sectarian spirit so engrained and crystallized that we would have to go on to the bitter end? Or do things have to work out of their own accord and in the good time of God, as Luther indicated? We talked about these and many other things as we drove back to Saint Louis that night.

But one of the outstanding gatherings was at Wynnewood Chapel in Dallas, Texas. It was held June 30-July 7. Speakers and teachers were Darrell Bolin, Leroy Garrett, and myself. This launched a series of meetings which were held annually. Sometimes there were two meetings per year. They were notable for their openness and for their freedom of spirit. As time went on, brethren from every background were given an opportunity to speak. Brother Degroot and Ralph Graham from the Disciples of Christ, Jack Holt from the anti-cooperation wing, Ervin Waters from the one-cup brethren. We invited brethren from every segment and they came. One day Pat Hardeman came and asked a lot of insistent questions. He was with Florida College at the time. We were surprised a little later to learn that he had gone with the Universalist Church. Sometimes things warmed up quite a bit as brethren brought with them some of their clan. They came to listen to their man and as soon as he had finished they walked out.

J. D. Phillips joined with us in teaching and it was great to share with him. He was editor of "The Truth." His knowledge of restoration history was amazing and we were greatly blessed by the anecdotes which he told. Bill Thurman taught one year and gave fresh insights into the Word. There was nothing static about the meetings. They changed from year to year as the personnel of the congregation changed. There was much to learn in the exchange of ideas. Looking back on things I can see that these meetings were within the will of God. They were a part of our struggle for the meaningful life. The influence of Leroy, calm and unruffled, was a real part of the gatherings.

In December I finished a reprint of articles by Reuel Lemmons and my reply to the same. I said: "Better days are ahead for all of us. There are signs everywhere that attitudes are changing. Brethren are becoming more bold in their declarations against orthodoxy and legalism. Of course we anticipate further areas of personal attack and boycott, but this is a small price to pay for freedom in Christ Jesus. Be sure that we shall not allow ourselves to become embittered or cease to love. Our hope of sharing with Jesus over there depends upon our exhibiting love to all of the brethren over here."

That year, the Hartford Forum featured talks by Russell Boatman on "The Basis of Authority"; Harold Key on "Fellowship and Endorsement"; Roy Key on "Legalism and Faith"; Grayson Ensign on "Is Unity Possible in Diversity?" and by Leroy Garrett on "The Vocabulary of the Holy Spirit." I spoke on "The Relationship of Immersion to Fellowship." A great time was had by all!

DOWN HOME WITH CARL

I am scheduled to be at Knoxville, Tennessee, with the West Towne Christian Church, November 14-16. The congregation has just celebrated its ninth anniversary and there are people from varied backgrounds represented. The location is 401 Gallaher View Road No. 5, Knoxville, Tennessee 37919 . . . December 2-5 I will be with the saints at Denton, Texas. Nell and I are looking forward with a lot of happy anticipation to being with Leroy and Ouida . . . The Saint Louis Forum has been cancelled this year. The energy shortage coupled with decreasing interest the last two years made us feel that it was the thing to do. We shall miss it. It continued for more than a quarter of a century . . . I am to be in Roswell, New Mexico, January 23-25. You may write Stan Harbour, 1912 West Second Street, Roswell, New Mexico 88201. . . Oak Hill Chapel in Saint Louis, sponsored a Vietnamese Boat People Family who arrived from Hong Kong, after almost indescribable sufferings, on September 12. It required securing an apartment, furnishing it, securing food and clothing, and will now require nurturing them. We will need to teach them English and enroll the children in school. It has been a vitalizing experience working together hour after hour, and we ask your prayers that we may now carry it safely through to its ultimate conclusion. There are eight members of the family. . . I have been invited to give the B.D. Phillips Memorial Lectures at Lincoln Christian Seminary on February 20, 21. It is my hope that I shall be able to meet a lot of good friends there for the occasion . . . On March 28 I will speak for the Century Club at Macomb, Illinois, where John Derry works so effectively. I count it a real privilege to return to view that campus ministry project. . . My book, *Colony of Heaven,* is having a good run. It's a historical study of the origin of the congregation at Philippi, with ramifications for our life today. It really makes a difference when one studies the love letters of the New

Testament in the three-fold context of geography, history and revelation. . . My next book will probably be off the press before the new year rolls around. It is called *In the Beginning.* It is an account of the change I made when the Spirit of God turned me around and I was able through the grace of God to discard the frightful sectarian spirit. It is an updated version of my book *Thoughts on Fellowship* which was written way back in 1957 when I ceased to trust for my salvation in The Church of Christ, and began to place my hopes on the Christ of the church. We will take your advance order now. . . Great changes are occurring in our generation as people begin to shake themselves loose from the bondage of this world. I have just concluded the fourteenth session of Bible Study in the Catholic Church. There were 17 hungry persons enrolled, including one priest and three nuns. . . We have resumed home Bible Studies at Oak Hill Chapel with good attendance. It is amazing how many more people will come to a home than will attend at an ecclesiastical structure. Last year we had 105 in attendance in five homes . . . Our Sunday evening meetings in Tower Grove Park were noted for three things — the size of the audience which was greater than we could have accomodated in our little building, the breadth of coverage of various denominational backgrounds represented, the eagerness with which all participated in participating in the songs and in listening to the proclamation of the gospel. We plan to resume these meetings next year, if God wills. — W. Carl Ketcherside, 139 Signal Hill Drive, Saint Louis, Missouri 63121.

OUR CHANGING WORLD

Several people from the Church of Christ have become involved in Wycliffe Bible translation work, an organization that seeks to provide the scriptures to 200,000,000 people speaking 3,500 languages that do not yet have the Bible in their own vernacular. Danny and Suzanne New and Ralph and Judy Reed are two such families. The Wycliffe officials have been known to be uneasy with the position usually taken by Churches of Christ on baptism, a point that has to be worked out by our people who wish to work with this organization, who are expected to work with believers of diverse backgrounds.

John S. May, 248 W. Vincennes, Linton, IN 47441, and other believers have started a new congregation with a new look. The group does not plan to have either a church building or a hired preacher. No regular collections will be taken, but only for specific needs as they arise. All believers are accepted as members if they accept the seven unities of Eph. 4. Sunday morning services center around the Lord's table and is for Christians only and not for evangelism, which will be done elsewhere. Elders will eventually be selected who will be in complete charge of the decision-making process.

Everett R. Anderson, a Dallas preacher working in Church of Christ missions in India, revealed in a recent report how "cost conscious" those are who support his work. He figures from the number he baptized in India during one campaign that the cost ran 1.00 per soul, and for the entire year he baptized one person for each 6.00 received.

Dick Marcear, minister to the Central Church of Christ in Amarillo, Texas, reports in his bulletin that he occasionally reads something that really grabs him, and this gem was one: *If you don't love, you'll find an excuse. If you do love, you'll find a way.*

Someone sent me a copy of a sermon by a minister in a fast growing Church of Christ in Kentucky, in which some long-cherished presuppositions were lovingly questioned. The minister is concerned that we presume to have "arrived" as far as truth is concerned, and that "We are a finished product." He wonders why we

should view the past two thousand years of church history as of little consequence, except for the past century and a half of the Restoration Movement. This exalts the first century as a golden age, he notes, and presumes that the first-century church was "the true church," which after the first century went into apostasy, and was then restored by the Restoration pioneers. He told his church that this mininterprets both history and the Restoration Movement. In reference to our attitude toward other Christians, he calls for more openness. Observing that a college choir came to sing at their church, he asked who it was that composed the hymns they sung, and then says: "We need to be careful how we refer to others, past and present, upon whom we have depended so heavily in our own proclamation of the gospel and in our own worship. Ingratitude is not a virtue."

In view of the above, a point made in a recent mail-out by Hearld of Truth, might be emphasized: "Many have never heard that there are New Testament Christians like you nearby who can help them. They don't realize that the church as it was originally established is still here — today." To affirm that Christ's church does indeed exist today, however hidden in the morass of sectarianism, is a thesis with which all Christians would agree. But to say that *we,* and we alone, are that church could justly be viewed as a monumental absurdity.

BOOK NOTES

For 11.50 we can send you *People's New Testament with Explanatory Notes* by B. W. Johnson. There is an introduction to each book and many useful, no-nosense comments on the text. It has long been a favorite among our people.

But I Never Thought He'd Die by William Baker Nye tells how a widow can create a satisfying new life for herself. The author, who writes a newspaper advice column, was a widow who is now happily remarried. It deals with all the questions of widowhood and is suitable for friends of widows as well as widows. 5.45 postpaid.

Merlin Carothers has written several books on praise. Now in *Victory on Praise Mountain* he tells his own story, showing how a life of praise has made a difference. 3.55 postpaid.

For 14.95 you can get *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* by H. S. Gehman, which must be the best that money can buy. It has over 1,000 pages of the latest biblical data, colored maps, and hundreds of pictures and illustrations. Beautifully bound, it makes a splendid gift for a lover of the Bible.

For children 3-13 (and for everyone in a way) we recommend *The Child's Story Bible,* which is not only true to the Bible but has many colorful pictures illustrating the stories. This is one of the tried and tested storybooks for children, revised again and again through the years. 9.95 postpaid.

Ideal for personal or group study is *The Epistles of John* by F. F. Bruce. One does well to read anything that Bruce writes. Since the Asian Christians to whom John wrote were facing a schism that threatened their faith, it is vital for us to see how the apostle gave them assurances that saved them from the peril. 4.55 postpaid.

Lewis B. Smedes' *Love Within Limits* is a realist's view of 1 Cor. 13. He shows how finite man, beset by all that is human, can approximate the great ideals of Paul's love hymn. You will be impressed by both its practicality and depth. He tells, for instance, how agapic love reduces irritability. If you and someone you care for ever read a book to each other, as Ouida and I do, I'd recommend this one. 4.55 postpaid.

There are some really helpful chapters in *Try Marriage Before Divorce* by James E. Kilgore, who draws upon many years of experience as a marriage counselor. He provides some self-disclosure exercises that